



F.E.V.R.
Fédération Européenne des Victimes de la Route
European Federation of Road Traffic Victims

Press Release

16 November 2004

World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims

On 21 November 2004 – the third Sunday of November

Worldwide Anniversary of Special Day to Remember Road Victims

Commemorated as **World Day of Remembrance**, this special day for road crash victims was initiated 11 years ago and first known as **European Day of Remembrance**, before it became known, and began to be observed, as **World Day of Remembrance**.

It is a day, on which all those killed and injured in road crashes are remembered, together with their families, the emergency services and all others affected or involved in the aftermath. Acts of remembrance, both religious and secular, will again take place - in places of worship and civic venues, involving not only victims, but policy makers, various stakeholders, local dignitaries, schools and community groups.

Road death and injury a Global Disaster

Road crashes are *the* leading cause of violent deaths and injuries worldwide and World Day of Remembrance is drawing attention to the enormous scale, which is predicted to grow, according to the World Health Organisation's major report launched this April.

"...Worldwide, the number of people killed in road traffic crashes each year is estimated at almost 1.2 million, while the number injured could be as high as 50 million – the combined population of five of the world's largest cities..."

from the Introduction to the report

"Every day thousands of people...will never return home, leaving behind shattered families and communities...Current efforts to address road safety are minimal in comparison to this growing human suffering"...

from the Foreword by the Director General of WHO and the World Bank's President

Need to remember and acknowledge loss and suffering

Road deaths and injuries are not treated as seriously as other disasters, and road victims do not receive the same respect and compassion as other victims of violence.

FEVR's study into the impact of road crashes has revealed an enormous level of suffering, which was found to be compounded by the casual treatment of road death and injury by the legal system, the authorities and society as a whole.

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Support for Day of Remembrance - to change attitudes to road violence

The tireless work, over many years, of road victim organisations in highlighting the plight of those bereaved and injured and campaigning for a change of attitudes towards road danger, has contributed to a growing awareness of the issues. Through the World Health Organisation and United Nations taking up this issue, particularly this year, when World Health Day on 7th April was dedicated to Safer Roads under the slogan 'Road Safety is no Accident' and the UN General Assembly in New York on 14th April discussed the 'global road safety crisis', and offering support to this World Remembrance Day, it is hoped that attitudes to road violence will change leading to a significant reduction of so many needless and preventable deaths and injuries.

Worldwide Awareness and Events

■ Messages will go out to politicians, the media, representatives of relevant professions and organisations, as well as the general public – informing them of World Day of Remembrance for Road Crash Victims, the enormous scale of the disaster and the urgent need to halt it - calling on them to honour the day and at the same time end the cruel disrespect towards road crash victims.

■ Posters and leaflets will publicise the day and the cause widely.

■ Religious and secular events will be held in the week leading up to World Day and on the Day itself, from:

- a tree planting ceremony in a Remembrance Garden in Lenasia, an Indian district of Johannesburg, South Africa
- a wreath-laying ceremony at a memorial to road victims in Nievre, France
- a conference 'The day after a road crash' and a Cathedral service, Rhodes, Greece
- a 'March in white' of people dressed in white representing those killed and injured during one year in Luxemburg
- the launch of an internet memorial by the Luxemburg victim association
- a large ceremony for the whole of The Netherlands - 'Broken Lives' - in Assen
- publicity against the epidemic of road casualties via posters and a ceremony in Evora, Portugal, supported by a recently formed coalition **Live Road – Association against Trauma**, already joined by 20 organisations
- a concert at London's Wigmore Hall in memory of road crash victims
- a Workshop for health professionals, attended by a WHO representative, on 'Neglect of trauma care', in London
- and many more, to
- numerous special remembrance services being held, and prayers said, in places of worship of all denominations throughout the world.

From the UK press release:

"We hope that knowing they are not alone or forgotten, will provide comfort to crash victims and a source of strength. We welcome the growing national and international support for our Remembrance Day – with millions of people across the globe we share sadness and despair, but also hope for an end to this preventable carnage."

From the Portuguese press release:

The spirit of this celebration and public recollection of the memory of those who lost their lives or health on Portuguese roads represents a recognition by society and the state of the tragic dimension of road crashes and helps survivors deal with the trauma

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